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ABSTRACT

Local history/genealogy collections are found in approximately 60% of Ohio public libraries. These collections range from fully established large collections to those in the process of being organized. A survey was made of 140 of these public libraries to determine how the collections are utilized. Areas such as organization, management, policies and procedures, programs and projects, electronic resources, use of volunteers, and publicity are covered. Opinions of local history/genealogy specialists are included regarding funding, training, and time allotted to the collection. Responses are tabulated for all libraries, as well as by size of library. This study furnishes an overview of the status of local history/genealogy collections in Ohio public libraries. It also provides a general guide to creating an effective and accessible local history/genealogy collection. A copy of the questionnaire is appended. Contains 23 references. (Author/MES)

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A STUDY OF THE UTILIZATION OF LOCAL HISTORY AND GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN OHIO

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A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library
and Information Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Beth Daugherty

June, 1999

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ABSTRACT

Local history/genealogy collections are found in approximately 60% of Ohio public libraries. These collections range from fully established large collections to those in the process of being organized. A survey was made of 140 of these public libraries to determine how the collections are utilized. Areas such as organization, management, policies and procedures, programs and projects, electronic resources, use of volunteers, and publicity are covered. Opinions of local history/genealogy specialists are included regarding funding, training, and time allotted to the collection. Responses are tabulated for all libraries, as well as by size of library. This study furnishes an overview of the status of local history/genealogy collections in Ohio public libraries. It also provides a general guide to creating an effective and accessible local history/genealogy collection.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTON

Local history and genealogy collections are an important part of many public libraries, whether they are small collections limited to the local area or large genealogical research centers with national, state, and local resources. A local history collection gathers and organizes those materials which document, describe, and illustrate the history of a given community, area, or region (Burns 1987, 12). The study of local history helps citizens acquire a sense of place and understand how a community's past meshes with broader historical trends. The knowledge gained from studying local history also enables citizens to participate as informed members of society and to evaluate current happenings in the context of the community's long-term development (North Carolina Library Association 1988, 70).

Purpose of the Study

A problem for the librarian assigned to establish a local history/genealogy room in Ohio is the lack of information on utilization of materials, services, and programs in the local history area of Ohio public libraries. A review of public libraries in Ohio (American Library Directory 1998-99 and Directory of Ohio Public Libraries 1998) reveals that approximately sixty per cent have a local history/genealogy special collection. Karen Burns states in her article on local history and the local library that the local history collection requires direction (Burns 1987, 12). This study provides some direction for those librarians entrusted to establish and maintain local history/genealogy collections in public libraries in Ohio. This was accomplished by a survey of Ohio public

libraries with local history/genealogy collections to determine how the collections are used, and what sort of planning by a library results in an effective and accessible local history/genealogy collection.

Some of the questions the answers are the following: How are patrons made aware of a local history room or collection? How is a local history room staffed? Is genealogical instruction provided for patrons? Does the library provide electronic resources for the genealogist, such as software or internet access? Does the library provide programs for the public on the topics of local history or genealogy? What role do volunteers play in regard to the local history/genealogy collection? Does the library have a collection development policy for local history? The results of this survey may be used as a guide to help develop the local history collection, services, and programs of libraries beginning such a project.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined as follows:

Local history collection: books, maps, photographs, and other material referring to the local area where the library is situated; sometimes called a local collection (Keenan 1996,151).

Genealogy: the study of family history, the tracing of a line of descent through successive generations or a pedigree, the history of a family or group of families (Kent, Lancour, and Daily 1973, 200).

Because these two terms, local history and genealogy, are often referred to concurrently in library literature, they are used interchangeably in this paper, unless specified otherwise.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to 140 public libraries in Ohio with local history/genealogy collections. The collections are limited to geographic area. Collections focusing on one individual are not included. The total number of libraries to be surveyed for this study was determined by a review of *American Library Directory* and OPLIN. The results of this study are not meant to be generalized to libraries in localities other than Ohio.

Historical Background

Historically, local history and the development of local collections have always been an important part of the American experience. Starting with the pre-colonial period there has been an abundance of local materials. Governmental records were created for each of the colonies, and histories of New England, Virginia, and Massachusetts were published. Publication of the first newspapers in 1690 and the first periodical in 1741 led to the growth of serial literature. After the Civil War, local materials and users of local materials increased dramatically. Some of the reasons for this rise were the growth of public education, the use of industrialization, the advent of leisure time, the increasing complexity of life, and the mobility of society (Kent, Lancour, and Daily 1973, 262).

Previous to the Civil War most of the approximate sixty historical societies were based in the original thirteen colonies. After the Civil War the number of historical societies grew rapidly and expanded across the country. Most of the local history and genealogy literature was produced under the auspices of the local and state historical societies. This literature is marked by four periods of specialized publications. Immediately after the Civil War regimental histories were published. Between the

1870's and 1920's biographical county, regional, and state histories were published for every area of the country. During the 1930's the government's Federal Writer's Project sponsored archival and secondary activities in local areas. Since the 1940's emphasis has been on microfilming projects sponsored primarily by historical societies (Kent, Lancour, and Daily 1975, 262)

Another aspect of the post-Civil War period was the growth in the number of scholarly disciplines and professions which were interested in the local area. Also, the number of interest group organizations and associations grew. These groups influence opinion and action in their own group and in society. Such groups include political, social, economic, and professional organizations. Publications of these groups provide not only communication between members, but a primary source of information on the activities of these groups in society (Kent, Lancour, and Daily 1975, 263).

Before 1876, attempts to organize local materials for collective use were isolated. During this period many library collections were developed by assimilating previously existing private collections (Kent, Lancour, and Daily 1975, 263). The Library of Congress, for example, had material relating to local history and genealogy since the personal library of Thomas Jefferson was sold to Congress after the War of 1812 (Austin 1990, 271). The Library's local history and genealogy collection greatly increased in 1865 due to the copyright law requiring that every copyrighted publication be deposited in the Library of Congress. In 1870 Congress amended the law further to consolidate the entire copyright process at the Library. The Library of Congress still acquires local history and genealogy publications through the copyright office, as well as through author donations (Austin 1990, 271).

After formation of the American Library Association in 1876, the literature on local collecting developed, and local history collections became a frequent topic at meetings of ALA and state and local associations (Kent, Lancour, and Daily 1973, 263-264). Interest in genealogy increased in the U.S. during the 1930's (Null 1985, 30), and in 1935 the Library of Congress opened a reading room for American local history and genealogy (Austin 1990, 272). The purpose of the room was to provide better service to those coming from around the country to consult the Library's large collections of genealogy and state and local history (Austin 1990, 272).

After the airing of the *Roots* mini-series on television in 1976-1977, interest in genealogy and local history rose further. The National Archives reported a one-fifth increase in business and a Gallup poll showed that sixty-nine percent of Americans were at least somewhat interested in tracing their ancestry. Genealogical and historical societies, as well as libraries, were hard-pressed to keep up with the demand for genealogical materials (Null 1985, 30).

Contemporary Needs

Traditionally, the country's public libraries have been responsible for providing local history resources, and it is still true today (Marchiafava and Johnson 1994, 257). Although many aspects of local history/genealogy collections, such as preservation and security, remain constant, technology is changing the way libraries maintain the collections and provide services to patrons. The following is a discussion of the current characteristics and needs of effective local history/genealogy collections.

Planning is crucial to the organization and operation of an effective local history collection (NCLA 1988, 71). Library literature contains recommendations of collection

materials for use in local history rooms, as well as recommendations for policies, procedures, services, and programs. The North Carolina Library Association states that a good local history collection should include both print and non-print materials pertaining to the people and history of the geographical area for which the library is responsible. These should be supplemented with a basic collection of historical and genealogical works (North Carolina Library Association 1988, 68). Several formats of materials are typically found in local history collections. These are books, photographs/post cards, newspapers, maps, manuscripts, ephemera, oral history tape recordings, and government documents (Burns 1987, 14-16). Other items may include pamphlets, clippings and vertical file materials, microform, and video recordings (North Carolina Library Association 1988, 82, 83, 86, 88).

The Local History Committee of the History Section, Reference and Adult Services Division of the American Library Association, has developed guidelines for establishing local history collections (RQ 1993, 42) and guidelines for preservation, conservation, and restoration of local history and local genealogical materials (RQ 1993, 341). These guidelines are intended to assist those beginning local history collections (RQ 1993, 42) and those libraries needing to preserve, conserve, or restore heavily used, rare, and fragile local history materials in all formats (RQ 1993, 341). The following four paragraphs discuss the guidelines in more detail.

When considering whether or not to commit to developing a local history collection, an assessment should be made of the services already being offered by other libraries in the area (RQ 1993, 42). In situations where other libraries collect some aspect of local history or genealogy, the library can plan a collection that supplements the other

resources available in the community (Carvalho 1988, 109). The library should also identify the emphasis of the collection, and write an acquisitions policy for collecting local history materials (RQ 1993, 42). A well-written and conceived policy can be useful in explaining acquisitions to patrons, library governing bodies, and supervisors (NCLA 1988, 71). The policy should describe the types of materials to be collected by the library, and identify those materials not to be collected. The specific geographic area and time period should be specified also (Carvalho 1988, 109). Other procedures and policies should be developed and written, as well (Burns 1987, 13). This is especially important if volunteers are involved. Policies should cover such things as gifts, circulation, copying privileges, and regulations regarding the use of fragile and rare material (Carvalho 1988, 109).

ALA recommends that local history collections be established in an identifiable place, separate from the other collections of the library. It should be secure from theft. An environment conducive to the preservation of materials should be provided (RQ 1993, 43). Although a separate room is ideal, small libraries may use locked cases, filing cabinets, and map cases (Carvalho 1988, 113). According to Burns, materials should be stored to minimize further deterioration of the material, while still allowing users to access the information in the materials. Materials should be stored in a cool, relatively dry, dust-free environment, protected from damaging light. Acid-free storage containers should be used when available (Burns 1987, 16, 17). A budget should be sufficient to acquire, process, and maintain the collection, and rare and fragile items should be protected from constant use by patrons (RQ 1993, 43).

The local history collection should be managed by trained staff. Professionals can be assisted by trained volunteers (RQ 1993, 43). The local history librarian should have a strong background and interest in history. Many of the skills needed by a local history librarian, such as knowledge of organization and preservation principles and ability to write fliers and other publicity materials, can be acquired through workshops or in-service training. However, one of the most important skills the librarian should possess is the ability to cultivate and maintain contacts with local government and community groups, especially local historical organizations. The librarian must become well known throughout the community in order to have people consider donating items of historical interest to the library (North Carolina Library Association 1988, 97).

Preservation, conservation, and restoration are essential components of maintaining a local history collection for future generations to enjoy. ALA guidelines for preservation include the recommendations to: assess collection preservation needs; develop a preservation plan; choose appropriate preservation techniques; obtain copyright clearances; and establish adequate funding (RQ 1993, 342). Conservation of materials involves the provision of the proper physical environment, and preparation of a disaster plan (RQ 1993, 342). Restoration of primary source materials is the most expensive and often the most desirable alternative; however, restoration does not result in any addition copies of the material (RQ 1993, 343).

Organization of the resources in the local history collection determines how readily patrons use the materials available. There are a number of ways to organize a collection, but the ultimate decisions about organization will depend on local needs, resources, and preferences (Burns 1987, 18). Certain aspects of technical services may

vary from standard procedures, but the extra time and money spent on the local history collection must be viewed as a long-term investment vital to the preservation of the history of a place. Appropriate cataloging and classification procedures enhance the accessibility of many local materials (North Carolina Library Association 1988, 79).

Two necessary characteristics of the catalog/index for the local history collection are suggested by Burns: a uniform list of subject headings to be used for all materials and a single catalog for all materials (Burns 1987, 19). It is recommended to spend some time with items in the collection before starting to assign subject headings, as subject headings will grow naturally out of the collection. An authority file of subject headings should be kept (Burns 1987, 19). They can be expanded as needed, and can also be subdivided by date or by proper name (North Carolina Library Association 1988, 79). Even though the library may wish to have separate files for items, such as photographs, books, and postcards, for inventory and control, the file for patron use should have the information about all the available materials in one file. Each of the citations must then indicate the type of material (Burns 1987, 19). Call numbers for local history materials should begin with letters "LH" (North Carolina Library Association 1988, 80).

There are many opportunities for volunteers in developing and maintaining local history collections. Volunteers should be interviewed in order to assure that their skills, interests, and personalities meet the needs of the collection. If they are accepted they should be provided with a handbook of information about the library, as well as a written procedure manual about the local history collection. Volunteers should also be given adequate training and instruction. Volunteers may be recruited from local historical or

genealogical societies, civic organizations, or simply from patrons with a willingness to volunteer in the library (North Carolina Library Association 1988, 98).

Services to the local history patron begin with reference service. Although local history reference should conform to general library policy for reference service, Caravalho states that the genealogical reference interview should be used with more precision than the general reference interview in order to save time for both the patron and the librarian. He suggests having the patron fill out a brief direct line chart in order to better understand the patron's information needs (Caravalho 1988, 115). Other services include providing copies of the collection description, bibliographies of interesting local materials, and a referral service. For local referral, the librarian may create a file listing individuals, organizations, government agencies and officials, and businesses which can provide further information assistance to the library user. Multiple copies of local histories should also be available for circulation.

Technology also plays an increasingly vital role in services offered to local history/genealogy patrons. A review of Ohio Public Libraries with web sites via OPLIN indicates that 29 public libraries have actual local history web sites, or links to local history/genealogy resources through the main library web site. Genealogy reference tools and finding aids are available on CD-ROMs and through online databases. Examples of CD-ROM products are PERSI (Periodical Source Index), AGLL (American Genealogical Lending Library), and Ancestry Genealogical Reference Library, which offers the full text of several genealogical reference works. Subscription genealogy resources include Ancestry.com, Everton Publishers, Family Tree Maker Genealogy Library, Ultimate

Family Tree Ultimate Library. Basic genealogy instruction is offered free through online web sites, such as Ancestry, Everton Publishers, Family Tree Maker, and Heritagequest.

Another aspect of using technology for the local history/genealogy collection is the use of digitization. Digitizing fragile and rare material can increase access to it without damaging the original. Digitization is expensive and time consuming, so the library thinking about such a project should consider several issues first. According to Tennant these issues revolve around publication rights, choosing material, and money and technical questions (Tennant 1998, 36).

Besides the general services offered to the patron of local history/genealogy, libraries can also implement programs and projects which make the local history resources more accessible to the public, as well as programs which result in donations to the local history collection. An example of the latter is a program called "guided autobiography". Guided autobiography gives participants an opportunity to create their autobiography in a group setting. Participants may then wish to donate a copy of their autobiography to the library's local history collection (Cooke 1994, 825-828). Projects such as creating video portraits and audiotaping oral histories to document the lives of elderly community leaders, also help preserve the history of a place (Kniffel 1993, 900). Two projects suggested by Banks are photographing the community as it is today, documenting business locations, buildings, etc., and tombstone transcribing (Banks 1987, 20).

Ideas for programs are only limited by the librarian's imagination and can be presented on a variety of topics. The librarian may wish to present short courses on genealogical research at the library, and also should be available to speak to groups on

local history and basic genealogical research. Community speakers and authors are often available to present programs on local history free of charge. Friends of the Library can be a good source of funding for paid speakers or more ambitious programs (North Carolina Library Association 1988, 100).

Additional projects and programs may revolve around cooperation with other institutions, such as libraries, historical societies, or schools. Studies show that cooperation between local historical or genealogical societies and libraries is mutually beneficial (Litzer 1991; Palmer, 1995). Cooperation often involves providing meeting space, referral service, and donation of materials (Litzer 1991). Projects with local schools may involve workshops for teachers regarding the resources available at the library (York 1992, 44-47+), and providing access to original source materials in the classroom by use of digitization and the internet (Doyle-Wilch and Pollitz 1995, 153-156).

A variety of patrons utilize local history/genealogy collections in unique ways. Public officials, teachers, historians, genealogists, preservationists, civic groups, interested citizens (North Carolina Library Association 1988, 70), and students (Golden 1991, 189; Doyle-Wilch and Pollitz 1995, 153; York 1992, 44) are among those using local history/genealogy resources. Public and technical services should reflect the needs of these local history/genealogy users (Caravalho 1988, 116).

These patrons must also be made aware of the resources available to them by publicizing the local history/genealogy collection. The librarian in charge should plan an ongoing marketing campaign designed to cultivate use of the collection and encourage donations of local history materials (North Carolina Library Association 1988, 99).

Occasional exhibits of the local history materials can stimulate interest, use, and gifts. The librarian should report major gifts, and programs and exhibits to the local media (Carvalho 1988, 116). Other promotional ideas include brochures, bibliographies, fliers, posters, and newsletters of local groups, such as the Friends or local historical and genealogical societies. The librarian may also develop a resource file to help in planning exhibits, programs, and publicity, as well as maintain a mailing list (North Carolina Library Association 1988, 99).

With proper planning, adequate budget, and knowledgeable staff, the local history/genealogy collection can be a meaningful and well-used addition to a library's general collection. The local history/genealogy collection must meet the needs of its community and its users. As York states:

> If a public library accepts the responsibility for collecting and preserving a broad range of primary and secondary sources that document the development of its locality, then it should insure that citizens, including schoolchildren, have ample opportunity to enjoy and learn from these materials.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

A search of the library literature indicates there are no studies on how local history rooms are utilized in public libraries in Ohio, although there are research studies available on the topic of local history and genealogy. Articles are available also on many aspects of developing a local history/genealogy collection, such as collection development, organization and preservation of materials, use of technology, and programs.

Two research studies were found that were relevant to the use of local history collections in public libraries in Ohio. The first study resulted in a core guide to Ohio genealogical materials (Humphrey 1991). The researcher surveyed a select group of libraries and genealogical societies in Ohio to determine which genealogical research and/or reference works would best fit into a recommended core collection of genealogical materials. The guide is designed for small and medium size libraries to help in the development of local history/genealogy collections. Items selected for the guide were based on respondent's ratings of a list of seventy works provided by the researcher. The list of seventy local history /genealogical resources was chosen based on currency, coverage, relation to other works, and whether or not the book was obtainable. Librarians and genealogical society representatives ranked the items according to whether or not the item should be included in a core collection, based on their knowledge and use of the materials. Respondents were also asked to include comments on the works and to add any works they felt should be included. From this research study, a core list of forty- eight titles was proposed as a guide for local history and genealogy collections. As

a survey of Ontario public libraries revealed, inadequate staff time and expertise are the chief factors that limit collection growth (Palmer et al. 1995). For the librarian with limited time and experience in genealogy, a core collection guide is a substantial start to establishing a local history collection.

Another study investigated local genealogical societies' cooperation with area libraries (Litzer 1991). The researcher surveyed 113 genealogical societies in Ohio to determine the degree with which they cooperated with libraries in their research area. The research revealed that the majority of genealogical societies have a positive cooperative relationship with their local library. Some of the ways in which societies interact with libraries are society promotion (libraries making information about the societies available to patrons); referral of library patrons to societies for genealogical assistance; reference service; and collection development. Genealogical societies often donate materials to local libraries, as well as store their own collections at local libraries. Libraries assist societies also by providing space for meetings and programs. The author points out that arrangements between societies and libraries are often on an informal basis, which can be a liability as well as a benefit. He advises having a written policy for library-society cooperation, especially in the area of collection development.

A third study (Palmer 1995) verifies the findings of Litzer with regard to the need for cooperation between genealogical societies and public libraries. The results of the survey of public libraries served by the Southern Ontario Library Service found that library cooperation and communication with local historical and genealogical societies resulted in mutually beneficial projects. The survey did indicate some problems faced by libraries with local history collections, such as lack of space, funds and equipment, theft,

and natural disasters. However, the Palmer study also found an increasing number of libraries using technology for preserving and expanding access to local history resources. This finding substantiates the findings of Doyle-Wilch and Pollitz (1995) and Alden (1996) in using technology to preserve local historical documents, as well as to expand access to them. Although the two libraries discussed in the articles are academic libraries, the points made are applicable to public libraries as well.

Doyle-Wilch and Pollitz (1995) describe a pilot project called "Partners in Learning" between Augustana (Illinois) College Library and the local schools. The project combined electronic access to rare materials held in the library with World Wide Web resources to bring the information to the classroom via the internet. The authors state that rare material is often difficult for students to use because it is fragile and access to it is strictly controlled. Digitizing the material supplies teachers with original source material for classroom use. Working with local teachers the library developed a database of locally held materials relevant to the school's curriculum. The college's special collections (or local history) materials were used to support units on local history. An example of the use of local history materials was a unit on the Civil War. High school students were connected to the database to see two sets of handwritten diaries written by local soldiers. They then transcribed the diaries and contributed their completed transcriptions to the database. This project demonstrates not only the benefits of using electronic technology to preserve and share local history materials, but the potential for public library-school partnerships. Public library-school partnerships are also recognized in an article by York (1992) discussed later in this paper.

Another article discusses a project conducted at Cline Library at Northern Arizona University to establish a database of digitized original photographs, manuscripts, and maps from the Special Collections and Archives Department (Alden 1996). Items selected for digitizing supported curriculum and instructional needs of the faculty whose classes were broadcast to distance sites statewide. This article describes the general advantages of digitizing and the decisions to be made before establishing an image database. The author states that two major benefits of digitizing collections are to provide remote access to library and archival materials and to provide a preservation format that supplements traditional preservation practice. Before establishing an image database there are several decisions to be made which will affect how the database is accessed, who the users will be, and the future of the database as technologies change. In the project discussed, decisions revolved around academic support, funding, technologies, data standards, indexing and retrieval, security, and copyright. This article offers some guidelines for libraries interested in starting a digitizing project: start small, expect the unexpected, ensure adequate systems support, assess what's working, be willing to change how you're doing things, and think in the future sense.

A more current article on digitizing is written by Tennant (1998). Tennant states that digitizing rare and fragile material can greatly increase access to it without harming the original. However, digitizing is time-consuming and expensive, and libraries should consider several issues before making the decision to digitize. These issues include publication rights, choosing materials, and money and technical questions. Publication rights refer to what the library has a right to digitize. Generally, anything published at least seventy- five years ago is in the public domain, but for most published material less

than seventy-five years old, and unpublished materials, publication permission must be received from the copyright holder.

When choosing materials from a local history collection to be digitized, there should be enough related material available to make the collection worthwhile to search or browse. Materials should also be diverse and unique to the library. Try to avoid digitizing collections that may be been done better by others. Tennant believes that digitizing print material to preserve it is questionable, but if the original is not thrown away after digitizing it, then the odds that the materials won't disappear are increased. Libraries must also consider the audience and potential use of a digitization project, as well as opportunities for support and funding.

A further consideration for the local history/genealogy librarian is programs and services for the community. Cooke (1994) describes one such program called guided autobiography. In this article the author shares his experience in starting a guided autobiography group in his library and the profound effect of the experience on the participants of the group. Guided autobiography is a way of building a local history collection by use of first-person accounts. The author used a book titled *Guiding Autobiography Groups for Older Adults* by Birren and Donna E. Deutchman as his guide to starting a group in his library. He feels that the library is a perfect setting for successful guided autobiography groups and that librarians can be very successful group facilitators. In the article, he points out the basic steps to take in starting and running the group. These include publicity, conducting a preliminary interview of participants, conducting the first meeting, and guiding the participants through the process of writing and sharing autobiographies. Participants are invited to donate a copy of their

autobiography to the library's local history collection, but it is not a requirement for participation. The author states that there are other benefits to a guided autobiography program than just adding to the library's collection. These benefits revolve around the effect that the program has on the participants. He found that the process of recollecting and sharing memories is often more important to many of the group members than the completed autobiography.

Public libraries can serve their communities by offering to work with the local schools in integrating the local history collection into the school curricula. York (1992) emphasizes the role that public libraries can have in using their collections to help teachers make their lessons interesting, challenging, and meaningful. The author states that in order to do this, the library must first make a commitment to a professionally managed local history collection. Some of the requirements for a such a collection are a collection development policy, a secure location with proper temperature and humidity levels, funding for archival supplies, effective organization of materials, and staffing by a knowledgeable professional librarian. Once items have been collected, preserved, and organized, the library should promote the collection within the schools. Communication between the library and the school is an essential component of a partnership. The author stresses that the purpose of such a service is to provide teachers with resources that can be used creatively, not to prescribe teaching methods.

Information is available in the library literature regarding establishing and maintaining a local history collection. One such guide (North Carolina Library Association 1988) discusses collection development, technical services, the library environment, staffing, programming, and marketing. A good local history collection

should include print and non-print materials connected with the history of the local geographic area the library serves. It should be supplemented by a basic collection of historical and genealogical works to help patrons research their own family or community histories. This article points out the needs of various local history/genealogy collection patrons, such as public officials, teachers, historians, genealogists, and preservationists. Even though this article is ten years old, and does not have information on digitizing or internet resources, the advice and recommendations are still relevant for a librarian currently trying to establish a local history collection.

In conclusion, there is extensive information in the library literature on the subject of local history/genealogy in the form of guidelines, "how-we-do-it-good" articles, project evaluations, and research studies. However, there is a need to evaluate and define how local history rooms and collections are currently utilized in the state of Ohio. Particularly with the advent of internet access and CD-ROM databases, a measure of the materials and resources used in local history rooms will be of benefit to those librarians entrusted to develop and maintain a local history collection.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study was a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was mailed to 140 public libraries in Ohio with local history/genealogy collections. Follow up was done for those libraries that did not respond to the first questionnaire within one month.

The purpose of the survey was to determine:

1.) What sort of planning by Ohio public libraries results in effective and accessible local history/genealogy collections.

2.) How local history/genealogy collections in Ohio public libraries are utilized by patrons.

3.) What role computer technology is playing in the utilization of local history/genealogy collections in public libraries in Ohio.

Results of the survey are used as a guide to those public libraries in Ohio that may be considering establishing local history/ genealogy collections or those libraries wishing to update services and programs.

Libraries chosen for this study were 140 public libraries in the state of Ohio determined to have local history/genealogy collections. The number of libraries was determined by a review of the Ohio public libraries listed in *American Library Directory* with subject interests or special collections in local history and genealogy. The public libraries listed in *American Library Directory* were double-checked with those listed in *Directory of Ohio Public Libraries*. Libraries with subject interests or special collections in areas of local history and genealogy, but not designated as such are included. These

include those libraries listing oral histories, newspaper microfilm collections, and other specific topics. For example, Massillon Public Library lists a special collection of Early Ohio and Quaker History, and Portsmouth Public Library lists a special collection on the North West Territory.

A search was also done through OPLIN of libraries with local history/genealogy web sites or links to local history resources through the main web site. Five libraries were found to have web sites for local history/genealogy collections, but were not listed in *American Library Directory* as having local history/genealogy collections. One branch library, Fairview Park Regional, is included in the total because of its well-known local history/genealogy collection. No other branch libraries are included. For this study, local history/genealogy collections are limited to geographic area only. Special collections or subject interests pertaining to one person only, such as the Clarence Darrow collection at Kinsman Free Public Library, are not included.

Data was summarized and analyzed and the implications of the results are discussed. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Questionnaires were sent to 140 public libraries in Ohio with local history/genealogy collections. Of those 140, 98 responses were received for a 70% response rate. Statistical findings of the survey results are presented in tables representing each of the 25 questions. For purposes of comparison, the libraries are broken down into categories of small (service population of less than 10,000), medium (service population of 10,000 to 99,999), large (service population of 100,000 to 999,999), and very large (service population of one million or more). As indicated in Table 1, medium size libraries compose the majority of respondents (60%). Small libraries are the next highest group (22%) and large size libraries are third highest (14%). Very large libraries are the smallest group of respondents with four libraries, or four percent of the total respondents.

TABLE 1

OHIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES WITH LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

Library Size	Service Population	f	%
Small	Less than 10,000	21	22
Medium	10,000 to 99,999	59	60
Large	100,000 to 999,999	14	14
Very Large	1 million plus	4	4
Total		98	100

Main Geographic Area Emphasis

Each library was asked to name the main geographic emphasis of its local history/genealogy collection. The majority of all libraries combined (58%) indicate that the main geographic emphasis of their collections is the local city, town, or community. This ranges from a high of 76% of the small libraries to a low of 36% of the large libraries. Seventy-five percent of the very large libraries state that this is the main emphasis, as do 54% of the medium size libraries.

TABLE 2

MAIN GEOGRAPHIC AREA EMPHASIS OF LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (98)	
Area	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
City,town, Local area	16	76	32	54	5	36	3	75	57	58
County	7	33	31	52	11	79	2	50	51	52
Region	1	5	16	27	5	36	1	25	23	24
Ohio	1	5	9	15	4	29	1	25	15	15
Other	1	5	5	8	6	43	0	0	12	12

One small library listed school district as the main geographic area emphasis. Areas mentioned in the "other" category for medium size libraries are Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and the nation. Listed in the "other" category for large libraries are New England, states which feed into Ohio, states along major

migration routes to Ohio, and states which supplied immigrants to Ohio. One library has a national scope collection with strength in states east of the Mississippi. Many of the libraries listed more than one main geographic area emphasis. As one respondent stated, it is hard to limit the main emphasis.

Materials

Table 3 indicates the types of materials found in local history/genealogy collections. As might be expected, all libraries responding to the survey have books in their local history/genealogy collections. The next most prevalent materials are maps (83%), followed by clippings (80%) and microforms (74%). Other materials in descending order are ephemera (71%), newspapers (70%), pamphlets (63%), photos (61%), manuscripts (48%), videos (26%), postcards (24%), government documents (22%), and oral histories (20%). Thirteen percent of total respondents have other materials in their collections as well. Among the other materials are periodicals, wills and estate records, chancery records, city directories, scrapbooks, diaries, newsletters, broadsides, original record ledgers from county probate court, surname files, ancestor card files, slides, obituary cards and indexes, family histories, family files and correspondence, family group sheets by township, cemetery inscription and interment databases by township, newsletters of Ohio Genealogy Society chapters, and local Genealogy Society publications, such as birth and death records.

TABLE 3

MATERIALS INCLUDED IN LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

Materials	Small (21) f	%	Medium (59) f	%	Large (14) f	%	Very Large (4) f	%	Total (98) f	%
Books	21	100	59	100	14	100	4	100	98	100
Clippings	13	62	50	85	13	93	3	75	79	81
Ephemera	5	24	57	97	8	57	0	0	70	71
Govt. Doc.	0	0	15	25	6	43	1	25	22	22
Manuscripts	8	38	31	52	8	57	0	0	47	48
Maps	13	62	52	88	13	93	3	75	81	83
Newspapers	15	71	40	68	12	86	2	50	69	70
Oral Hist.	3	14	13	22	3	21	1	25	20	20
Pamphlets	9	43	43	73	9	64	1	25	62	63
Photos	10	48	39	66	8	57	3	75	60	61
Postcards	2	10	14	24	7	50	0	0	23	23
Videos	4	19	17	29	4	29	0	0	25	26
Microforms	12	57	44	75	13	93	4	100	73	74
Other	1	5	12	20	3	21	2	50	18	18

Seventy-four percent of 98 libraries have microform holdings. Small libraries have the smallest amount (57 %). Three-fourths of the medium size libraries have microforms and 13 of 14 (93 %) of large libraries have them. All of the very large libraries have microform holdings. As indicated by respondents, the majority of these microform are census and newspaper records. Other records on microform include county probate, tax, and vital records, obituaries, city directories, church records and cemetery inscriptions.

Major Location

The major locations of local history/genealogy collections vary among libraries (Table 4). Approximately half of the small (52%), medium (54%), and large (50%) libraries have the collection located in a separate room. None of the four very large libraries does. The very large libraries indicate one collection in a separate area and one in the reference area. The other two libraries have a collection in the history and genealogy department, and a dispersed collection. Thirty-eight percent of the small libraries state that the major location is in the reference area, while only 15% of the medium and 7% of the large libraries have the collection in the reference area.

TABLE 4

LOCATION OF LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

Location	Small (21) f	%	Medium (59) f	%	Large (14) f	%	Very Large (4) f	%	Total (98) f	%
Separate Room	11	52	32	54	7	50	0	0	50	51
Separate Area	2	10	15	25	4	29	1	25	22	22
Reference	8	38	9	15	1	7	1	25	19	19
Circulating Stacks	2	10	2	3	0	0	0	0	4	4
Other	0	0	4	7	2	14	2	50	8	8

The circulating stacks appear to be the least favorable location for the local history/genealogy collection. Locations cited in the "other" category are file cabinets, closed stacks in an office area, a corner area of a division, and scattered to A-V, reference, or the basement. Several libraries gave more than one answer to this question.

perhaps signifying the difficulty in separating the local history/genealogy collection completely from the general collection.

Operating Hours and Collection Hours

Tables 5 and 6 compare the total operating hours of the responding libraries with the number of hours the local history/genealogy collections are available to patrons. There appears to be very little difference overall between operating hours and collection availability hours. Ten percent of all responding libraries are open between 45 and 54 hours per week and 9% have local history/genealogy collections available 45 to 54 hours per week. Forty-seven percent are open 55 to 64 hours per week and 48% have collections available between 55 and 64 hours per week. Thirty-six per cent of libraries are open between 65 and 74 hours per week and 33% have local history/genealogy collections available 65 to 74 hours per week. Four libraries are open 75 or more hours per week, with three libraries having local history collections available the same number of hours. Only one of 98 libraries has a local history/genealogy collection available less than 34 hours per week, and only two collections are available between 34 and 44 hours per week. One library (medium size) did not respond to the question regarding the number of hours the library is open. Four libraries (two small, one medium, and one very large) did not answer the question regarding the number of hours the collection is available to patrons.

TABLE 5

LIBRARY OPERATING HOURS

Hours	Small (21) f	%	Medium (59) f	%	Large (14) f	%	Very Large (4) f	%	Total (98) F	%
34 or less	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
35-44	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
45-54	5	24	5	8	0	0	0	0	10	10
55-64	12	57	29	49	4	29	1	25	46	47
65-74	2	10	21	36	10	71	2	50	35	36
75 or more	0	0	3	5	0	0	1	25	4	4
No Answer	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1

TABLE 6

LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTION HOURS

Hours	Small (21) f	%	Medium (59) f	%	Large (14) f	%	Very Large (4) f	%	Total (98) f	%
34 or less	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
35-44	1	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
45-54	4	19	5	8	0	0	0	0	9	9
55-64	12	57	30	51	4	29	1	25	47	48
65-74	2	10	19	32	10	71	1	25	32	33
75 or more	0	0	2	3	0	0	1	25	3	3
No Answer	2	10	1	2	0	0	1	25	4	4

Management

Local history/genealogy collections are managed by a variety of staff, ranging from full-time local history librarians with masters degrees in library science to volunteers. As noted in Table 7, 29% of the collections are managed by a general

reference librarian with an MLS, followed by a full-time local history staff person without an MLS (21%). Part-time staff with no MLS are 20%, and volunteers are 4% of the total respondents. Only nine percent of 98 libraries have a full-time local history librarian with an MLS. Several libraries indicated shared management duties by checking more than one category. Twenty-six percent of all libraries mentioned other management, with director being the most cited. Other collection managers are a community services coordinator with MLS (with help from a trained volunteer), a part-time college student with history major, a full-time local history librarian with a MA, a full-time archivist with a MA, a full-time genealogist, and genealogy society members. Several libraries commented that management is shared.

TABLE 7

MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (98)	
Management	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Full-time * L.H. Lib. MLS	1	5	2	3	6	43	0	0	9	9
General Ref. Lib. MLS	7	33	12	20	5	36	4	100	28	29
Full-time LH. Staff No MLS	4	19	16	27	1	7	0	0	21	21
Part-time L.H. Staff No MLS	3	14	16	27	1	7	0	0	20	20
Volunteer	0	0	3	5	0	0	0	0	3	4
Other	6	29	18	30	2	14	0	0	26	26

Plans, Procedures, and Policies

Table 8 shows the respondent libraries' plans, procedures, and policies, which are in place regarding local history/genealogy collections. Collection development is the most widely used plan, with 62% of the libraries having a collection development plan. This ranges from a low of 52% of the small libraries to a high of 93% of the large libraries. Thirty% of the total have a disaster plan, 21% have a preservation plan, and 14% have procedures for volunteers. As indicated in Table 9, eleven of 14 (79%) of the large libraries have a local history/genealogy collection incorporated into the general collection development policy. This is followed by 75% of the very large libraries, 52% of the small libraries, and 51% of the medium size libraries.

TABLE 8

PLANS, PROCEDURES, AND POLICIES REGARDING LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

Plans and Policies	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (98)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Collection Devop-Ment	11	52	34	58	13	93	3	75	61	62
Disaster Plan	4	19	18	30	5	36	2	50	29	30
Preservation Plan	2	10	13	22	4	29	2	50	21	21
Volunteer Procedures	0	0	9	15	5	36	0	0	14	14
Other	0	0	5	8	2	14	1	25	8	8
None	3	14	5	8	0	0	0	0	8	8

TABLE 9

LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY INCORPORATED INTO THE GENERAL COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Incorporated Policy	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (40)		Total (98)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Yes	11	52	30	51	11	79	3	75	55	56
No	4	19	11	19	3	21	0	0	18	18
No Answer	6	29	18	30	0	0	1	25	25	26

Plans, procedures, and policies is one area that appears to be affected by size of library. For each category the small and medium libraries have the lowest participation, and the large and very large libraries have the highest. It should be noted, though, that neither the small nor the very large libraries have procedures for volunteers. Three of 21 small libraries (14%) and 5 of 59 of the medium size libraries (8%) have no plans, procedures, or policies in place for the local history/genealogy collection.

Eight libraries have other plans, procedures, and policies that are in place. Some of the other policies addressed are access to the local history room and materials, procedures for indexing local weekly newspaper, procedures for correspondence, and local history file guidelines. One medium size library commented that there are none currently in place because everything is in the process of being organized by a willing volunteer. A large library commented that they are working with the local genealogical society to develop a cooperative agreement between the two agencies regarding

responsibilties to one another, including collection development, collection management, and preservation. Five small and 13 medium size libraries did not respond to this question.

Written Policies

Data for local history/genealogy issues covered by written policies are shown in Table 10. Written policies regarding gifts (45% of total) and circulation (43% of total) are the most common written policies for all size libraries. Thirty percent of all the libraries have written policies covering copying privileges, and 13% have written policies covering fragile/rare materials. Some libraries have written policies on other local history/genealogy issues, such as local history room guidelines, admission to the local history room, cost for staff to do research, and acquisitions. One library commented that most policies, except collection development, apply to the entire library. Another commented that these are the general reference policies and procedures. Nearly a third (31%) of all libraries state that they do not address local history/genealogy issues in writing. Ten libraries - two small, six medium, one large, and one very large did not reply to this question.

TABLE 10

LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY ISSUES COVERED BY WRITTEN POLICIES

Issues	Small (21) f	%	Medium (59) f	%	Large (14) f	%	Very Large (4) f	%	Total (98) f	%
Copying Privileges	6	29	18	30	3	21	2	50	29	30
Circulation	11	52	22	37	7	50	2	50	42	43
Gifts	8	38	27	46	7	50	2	50	44	45
Fragile/Rare Materials	1	5	8	14	3	21	1	25	13	13
Other	0	0	8	14	1	7	0	0	9	9
Not Addressed	7	33	16	27	6	43	1	25	30	31

Security Measures

Locked storage cases, staff retrieval of materials, and guest registers (all 38% of the total) are the most common security methods for local history/genealogy collections. Next most popular is the locked room (29%), followed by requiring a patron ID (26%), use of magnetic security strips (23%), and having staff make copies (16%). Having staff retrieve material is the most popular security method for small libraries (38%) and very large libraries (75%). Use of guest registers is the most common method for medium size libraries (42%), and use of magnetic security strips is the most common method for large libraries (57%). None of the large or very large libraries have staff make copies for patrons. Other security methods mentioned are mounting original source material on the library's web site and having the local history room directly across from the circulation

desk. Three libraries wrote that security strips are on all library materials, not just local history. Two libraries state there are no security methods being used for local history/genealogy collections. One medium size library stated that more of these restrictions will be in place once the local history collection is better organized. Eight libraries (one small, six medium, and one large) did not respond to this question.

TABLE 11

SECURITY MEASURES USED FOR LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

Security Measure	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (98)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Locked Room	7	33	18	30	3	21	0	0	28	29
Locked Storage Cases	6	29	23	39	7	50	1	25	37	38
Magnetic Security Strips	1	5	13	22	8	57	1	25	23	23
Staff Retrieves Materials	8	38	22	37	4	29	3	75	37	38
Patron ID Required	2	10	15	25	6	43	2	50	25	26
Guest Register	7	33	25	42	5	36	0	0	37	38
Staff copies	7	33	9	15	0	0	0	0	16	16
Other	0	0	5	8	2	14	2	50	9	9
None	1	5	0	0	1	7	0	0	2	2

Preservation Measures

As can be seen in Table 12, acid-free containers are the most highly used method of preservation by all size libraries (52% of total). It is the only method used by all four of the very large libraries. Having staff retrieve materials (40% of the total) is a popular preservation method (as well as security method) along with keeping materials in a cool, dry environment (39%). Thirty-five percent of all respondents protect materials from damaging light and 25% have map cases. Ten percent of the libraries provide protective gloves for handling rare or fragile materials. Other preservation methods mentioned are copying clippings onto acid-free paper and encapsulation. Four libraries state that they do not use any preservation methods at this time, and 17 libraries (six small and 11 medium) did not respond to this question.

TABLE 12

PRESERVATION MEASURES FOR LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (98)	
Preservation	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Acid-free Containers	7	33	30	51	10	71	4	100	51	52
Map cases	1	5	16	27	5	36	3	75	25	25
Cool, dry Environ.	7	33	24	41	5	36	2	50	38	39
Protection From light	7	33	23	39	3	21	1	25	34	35
Gloves	1	5	6	10	2	14	1	25	10	10
Staff Retrieves Materials	7	33	25	42	5	36	2	50	39	40
Other	1	5	2	33	1	7	1	25	5	5
None	1	5	2	3	1	7	0	0	4	4

Organizational Methods

Libraries employ a variety of methods for organizing local history/genealogy materials. The majority of those surveyed use uniform subject headings (40%). Thirty – five percent have separate files for items such as photographs, postcards, and other materials and 13 percent have a separate catalog of all local history/genealogy materials for patron use. Twenty-five libraries checked the "other" category of organizational methods, indicating a variety of creative ways to organize local history information. Several libraries include all local history materials in the online catalog with all other library materials. Others catalog only monographs in the online catalog. Another method of organizing local history/genealogy materials is geographically. One medium size library places books on shelves alphabetically by categories, states, and counties. Another library also states that shelving is by geographic area, not Dewey number. Some libraries provide indexes to such items as tax records, family group sheets, obituaries, vital records, probate records, pamphlet and clipping files and/or local newspaper records. Seven small libraries (33%) and one medium size library do not have any special organizational method for their local history/genealogy collection. Two small libraries, seven medium size libraries, and one large library did not respond to the question.

TABLE 13

ORGANIZATIONAL METHODS USED FOR LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

Organizing Method	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (98)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Uniform Sub. Head.	6	29	28	48	3	21	2	50	39	40
Separate Catalog	3	14	9	15	1	7	0	0	13	13
Separate Files	2	10	24	41	6	43	2	50	34	35
Other	3	14	15	22	5	36	2	50	25	26
None	7	33	1	2	0	0	0	0	8	8

Volunteers

As Table 14 shows, fifty-seven percent of the total libraries responding to this survey do not use volunteers to help with their local history/genealogy collections. Three of the four very large libraries do not use volunteers and fifteen of the 21 small libraries do not. Of those libraries that do use volunteers, only 15% of them actively recruit volunteers and only 5% offer the volunteers training in local history/genealogy.

Ways in which volunteers are used are to staff the room or collection (10%), instruct patrons in genealogical research (10%), and to catalog local history materials (4%). Other ways in which volunteers are utilized include working on special projects, indexing and filing (particularly obituaries), organizing and labeling materials, organizing newspaper clippings, typing materials for the library web site, assisting staff with research requests, and identifying photos and providing background information about

community events. One medium size library notes that Genealogy Society members, when present, avail themselves to patrons who are hunting for materials, but there is no formal volunteer system.

TABLE 14

VOLUNTEER USE FOR LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (98)	
Volunteers	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Recruited	2	10	9	15	3	21	1	25	15	15
Trained	0	0	4	7	1	7	0	0	5	5
Staff room	1	5	8	14	1	7	0	0	10	10
Instruct Patrons	1	5	8	14	1	7	0	0	10	10
Catalog Materials	0	0	4	7	0	0	0	0	4	4
Other	2	10	16	27	4	29	1	25	23	24
None	15	71	29	49	9	64	3	75	56	57

Services

Many services are offered to local history/genealogy patrons. Nearly all libraries (94%) offer referrals to resources outside the library, and approximately half (51%) provide multiple copies of local histories for circulation. Bibliographies of local materials are provided by 39% of the responding libraries and copies of the collection description are provided by 32%. As Table 12 shows, all of the libraries offer some sort of service. Other services mentioned by small, medium, and large libraries are programs, brochures, microfilm rental, and classes. Services supplied by medium size libraries include a genealogy handout containing helpful research information, a pathfinder, research for a fee, assistance in using sources, research requests by mail, and interlibrary

loan. One medium size library supplies cemetery listings, funeral home listings, marriage records, high school yearbooks, and family histories. A large library telephones the local Health Department for patrons requesting death dates.

TABLE 15

SERVICES OFFERED TO LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY PATRONS

Services	Small (21) f	%	Medium (59) f	%	Large (14) f	%	Very Large (4) f	%	Total (98) f	%
Bibli-ographies	4	19	24	41	9	64	1	25	38	39
Description of LH col.	6	29	15	25	8	57	2	50	31	32
Circulating Local Histories	9	43	32	54	7	50	2	50	50	51
Referrals	18	86	59	100	14	100	3	75	94	96
Other	1	5	11	19	2	14	1	25	15	15

Electronic Resources

Tables 16 and 17 provide statistics on the availability of electronic resources for local history/genealogy collections (Table 16) and on plans for future use of electronic resources (Table 17). Of the 98 libraries responding to the survey, 90 of them (92%) currently have internet access, and three plan to acquire internet access within the next year. E-mail reference service seems to be a popular service to patrons. It ranges from 29% of the small libraries, to 36% of the large libraries, to 46% of the medium libraries. Three out of the four very large libraries have e-mail reference service. However,

onlytwo small libraries and three medium libraries plan to add e-mail reference in the next year.

Thirty eight (39%) of the libraries currently have a library web site with links to, or information about, the library's local history/genealogy collection, and 17 (17%) plan to add this feature within the next year. Thirty-seven (38%) of the total libraries provide links to websites pertaining to local history/genealogy and 21 (21%) provide links to websites with genealogy instruction. Seventeen of the total libraries are planning to add links to local history/genealogy sites and 10 libraries are planing to add links to genealogy instruction sites within the next year. Twenty-six percent of all respondents provide CD-ROM finding aids for patrons and 14% plan to add them. However, only seven (seven percent) of the 98 libraries have online subscriptions to local history/genealogy databases and only four plan to have them within the next year.

Genealogy software products for family tree making are provided by 31% of all libraries, with 11% planning to add them within a year. Digitization of part or all of the local history collection is currently being done by 11 of 98 libraries, and is being planned by 30 more libraries. Seven (three small and four medium) libraries indicate no electronic resources currently available to patrons. Five libraries indicate no further electronic resources planned for the next year.

Thirty-nine libraries (eight small, 27 medium, and four large) did not answer question 17 regarding electronic resources planned for the next year. This is interpreted as no electronic resources are being planned for the next year by the non-responding libraries.

TABLE 16

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

Electronic Resource	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (98)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
CD-ROM Finding Aids	1	5	19	32	4	29	1	25	25	26
Internet	17	81	57	97	12	86	4	100	90	92
Online sub. to LH/gen Database	0	0	5	8	2	14	0	0	7	7
Websites LH/gen	1	5	23	39	10	71	3	75	37	38
Websites Genealogy Instruction	1	5	13	22	5	36	2	50	21	21
Gen. Soft-Ware for Fam. Tree	5	24	21	36	2	14	2	50	30	31
Library Website	3	14	24	41	8	57	3	75	38	39
Digitization	0	0	7	12	2	14	2	50	11	11
E-mail Reference	6	29	27	46	5	36	3	75	41	42
Other	1	5	5	8	1	7	0	0	7	7
None	3	14	4	7	0	0	0	0	7	7

TABLE 17

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES PLANNED FOR LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

Electronic Resource	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (98)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
CD-ROM Finding Aids	1	5	7	12	4	29	2	50	14	14
Internet	0	0	1	3	2	14	0	0	3	3
Online sub. to LH/gen Database	0	0	2	2	2	14	0	0	4	4
Websites LH/gen	5	24	8	14	2	14	2	50	17	17
Websites Genealogy Instruction	2	10	6	10	1	7	1	25	10	10
Gen. Soft-Ware for Fam. Tree	4	19	6	10	1	7	0	0	11	11
Library Website	2	10	9	15	3	21	3	75	17	17
Digitization	5	24	19	32	3	21	3	75	30	31
E-mail Reference	2	10	3	5	0	0	0	0	5	5
Other	3	14	3	5	0	0	1	25	7	7
None	3	14	2	3	0	0	0	0	5	5

Cooperative Relationships

Cooperative relationships exist between libraries with local history/genealogy collections and a variety of other organizations regarding resources and/or services. The majority of all libraries (91%) responding to this survey have a cooperative relationship

with a historical or genealogical society. All of the large libraries cooperate with a historical or genealogical society. They are followed by 97% of the medium libraries, 75% of the large libraries, and 71% of the small libraries. Forty-two (43%) of 98 libraries cooperate with other libraries and 34 of 98 (35%) cooperate with schools. Other cooperative relationships exist with a local museum, a county probate court and county records center, a county health department, local government archives, the Hayes presidential library, university libraries, and city offices. A small library commented that there is no formal arrangement, but they cooperate when possible with other organizations. One small library did not reply to this question.

TABLE 18

LIBRARY AND ORGANIZATION COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS REGARDING LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (4)	
Organization	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Historical/ Gen. Soc.	15	71	57	97	14	100	3	75	75	76
Schools	7	33	25	42	2	14	0	0	34	35
Libraries	8	38	28	48	5	36	1	25	42	43
Other	7	33	9	15	2	14	0	0	18	18
None	1	5	4	7	0	0	1	25	6	6

Cooperative Practices

As shown in Table 19, referrals are the most common way that libraries with local history/genealogy collections cooperate with other organizations (70% of the total responding libraries do referrals). This is followed by meeting rooms (68%), programs

(45%), and workshops (26%). Twelve (12%) of 98 libraries list other ways of cooperation. Among these are tours, displays in library exhibit case, a material loan granted by a local historical society, co-sponsoring workshops with a local genealogy society, housing a local genealogy society's collection, and exchange of materials for copying. One medium size library has a cooperative relationship between the library, the city, the schools, and the historical society. A grant is enabling a library employee to act as a consultant to the other organizations in whatever capacity they need, such as cataloging or conservation of materials. Six libraries (one small, four medium and one very large) did not respond to this question. One small library indicated no cooperative practices.

TABLE 19

WAYS IN WHICH LIBRARIES WITH LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGICAL COLLECTIONS COOPERATE WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (98)	
Cooperation	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Workshops	5	24	15	25	5	36	1	25	26	26
Programs	7	33	29	49	7	50	2	50	45	46
Meeting Rooms	12	57	43	73	10	71	2	50	67	68
Referrals	14	67	43	73	10	71	2	50	69	70
Other	1	5	10	17	1	7	0	0	12	12
None	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

Programs Presented

According to the data, speakers on local history/genealogy topics were the most popular programs offered to local history/genealogy patrons during the past year (43% of respondents) and classes on genealogical research were the next most popular (35%). Only 14% of respondents had an author of a local history/genealogy topic and only one medium size library of all 98 respondents offered a guided autobiography program. Large and very large libraries offered the most programs, while small libraries offered the least. Other programs offered during the past year were crafts and games programs pertaining to local history, a program on Carnegie Libraries of Ohio, a program on use of computers and the internet in genealogy research, and Genealogical Society meetings. Three libraries also mentioned tours, particularly for school groups.

Eight percent of the libraries (five small, two medium, one large) stated that they did not offer local history/genealogy programs during the past year. Thirty-three libraries (nine small, 19 medium, four large, and one very large) did not answer this question. These libraries are interpreted as not having offered any programs during the past year.

TABLE 20

LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY PROGRAMS PRESENTED DURING THE PAST YEAR

Programs	Small (21) f	%	Medium (59) f	%	Large (14) f	%	Very Large (4) f	%	Total (98) f	%
Classes	2	10	22	37	8	57	2	50	34	35
Author	2	10	8	14	3	21	1	25	14	14
Speaker	7	33	27	46	7	50	1	25	42	43
Guided Auto-Biography	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other	1	5	7	12	1	7	1	25	10	10
None	5	24	2	3	1	7	0	0	8	8

Projects

A large percentage (49%) of the libraries surveyed (14 small, 28 medium, three large, and three very large) did not respond to this question. Because of the lack of a "no projects" category on the survey form, this is interpreted as not having any local history/genealogy special projects during the past year. Another eight percent of the libraries (three small, four medium, and one large) actually stated that there were no projects during the past year. These responses indicate that the majority of libraries (57%) were not involved in any special local history/genealogy projects during the past year.

Of the listed projects, publication of local histories (13%) was the most popular project, followed by oral history and photographing the community (both 10%). Tombstone transcribing was done by 7% of responding libraries and video portraits by

only two of 98 libraries. Twenty libraries listed other projects. Among the projects were preserving old photographs of past anniversary celebrations of a county, conducting workshops for high school students on beginning genealogy, creating a brochure about local cemetery occupants. One large library had a grant project to increase community awareness of the library as a deposit for local history materials in special collections. Another large library is currently working with a local television station to produce some two-minute shots on local history. Several libraries worked on indexing obituaries and other local records. A small library, a medium size library and a very large library all had digitization projects – putting some part of the collection, such as photos or an obituary index on the web.

TABLE 21

LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY PROJECTS DURING THE PAST YEAR

Projects	Small (21) f	%	Medium (59) f	%	Large (14) f	%	Very Large (4) f	%	Total (98) f	%
Oral History	3	14	4	7	3	21	0	0	10	10
Tombstone Transcribe	1	5	6	10	0	0	0	0	7	7
Photographs of comm-unity	4	19	4	7	1	7	1	25	10	10
Video Portraits	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	2
Publication Of local Histories	2	10	6	10	5	36	0	0	13	13
Other	1	5	13	22	4	29	1	25	19	19
None	3	14	4	7	1	7	0	0	8	8

Programs and Projects Planned

Table 22 can be compared with tables 20 and 21 to see which programs and projects were done during the past year and which ones are being planned for the upcoming year. In general, fewer programs and projects are being planned for the next year than were undertaken during the past year (162 programs and projects were undertaken during the past year and 138 programs and projects are planned for the next year).

The majority of programs and projects are very closely matched between those that were done and those being planned. For instance, 34 libraries offered classes in genealogical research and 36 plan to offer them. Forty-two libraries had speakers on local history/genealogy topics and 39 plan to have them. Fourteen libraries had authors of local history/genealogy topics present programs and 12 plan to have them. One library had a guided autobiography program and one plans to have a guided autobiography program.

Ten libraries were involved in oral history projects and nine libraries plan to have them within the next year. Two libraries had video portrait projects and one plans to have a video portrait project. Seven libraries were involved in tombstone transcribing and three plan to be involved in tombstone transcribing. Thirteen libraries published local histories and 11 plan to publish local histories within the next year. Ten libraries took photographs of the local community and 12 plan to do so within the next year.

The greatest difference between past programs and projects and future programs and projects is in the "other" category. Twenty-nine libraries of 98 (29%) presented other programs and were involved in other projects during the past year and only 14

(approximately half) of that number plan other programs and projects for the upcoming year.

Several interesting programs and projects are being planned for the upcoming year. They include a virtual exhibit on the web, classes on conservation, developing a new "pathfinder" and map of the local history room, filling gaps in the collection, doing a church record inventory, creating an obituary index, updating every name index in the local counties, and internet and digitization projects. One medium size library plans to have a weeklong awareness of the local history/genealogy collection on their bookmobile. They also plan to have a tent set up at a local fair and other area activities, and to put more local history/genealogy information on the internet.

Six libraries (three small and three medium) indicated that they are not planning any local history/genealogy programs and projects for the upcoming year. However, thirty libraries (seven small, 20 medium, two large, and one very large) did not respond to this question. This is interpreted as not planning any programs and projects for the next year.

TABLE 22

LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS PLANNED FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

Plans	Small (21) f	%	Medium (59) f	%	Large (14) f	%	Very Large (4) f	%	Total (98) f	%
Classes	3	14	22	37	9	64	2	50	36	37
Speaker	7	33	24	41	6	43	2	50	39	40
Author	1	5	8	14	2	14	1	25	12	12
Guided Auto-Biography	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
Oral History	3	14	6	10	0	0	0	0	9	9
Video Portrait	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
Tombstone Transcribe	1	5	2	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
Publication of Local Histories	3	14	4	7	4	29	0	0	11	11
Photographs of community	3	14	5	8	4	29	0	0	12	12
Other	3	14	8	14	3	21	0	0	14	14
None	3	14	3	5	0	0	0	0	6	6

Publicity

The most popular methods of publicizing local history/genealogy collections are brochures (43% of all responding libraries) and a librarian speaking to groups about the local history/genealogy collection (40% of all responding libraries). Other methods in descending order are library newsletters (39%), local media (36%), exhibits, newsletters of other groups, programs (all 33%), fliers (32%), bookmarks (21%), posters (16%), and bibliographies (12%). Eleven percent of all responding libraries promote the local

history/genealogy collections in other ways. Five libraries noted that they publicize on the library's website. One very large library advertises on "Ohioroots" listserve online. A small library places ads in various genealogy books such as *Genealogist's Address Book*. Other methods of promoting the collection are newspaper articles written by library staff, and cooperation with local historical/genealogical societies. Three libraries indicated that they do not publicize the local history/genealogy collection. Fourteen libraries of 98 (two small, nine medium, one large, and two very large) did not reply to this question. It is interpreted that they do not publicize the local history/genealogy collection.

TABLE 23

PUBLICIZING LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (98)	
Publicizing	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Bibli-ographies	3	14	2	3	7	50	0	0	12	12
Bookmarks	7	33	9	15	5	36	0	0	21	21
Brochures	6	29	27	46	7	50	2	50	42	43
Exhibits	5	24	19	32	6	43	2	50	32	33
Fliers	5	24	18	30	7	50	1	25	31	32
Library Newsletter	6	29	23	39	8	57	1	25	38	39
Local media	4	19	24	41	5	36	2	50	35	36
Other Newsletter	2	10	22	37	6	43	2	50	32	33
Posters	4	19	8	14	2	14	2	50	16	16
Programs	5	24	20	34	7	50	1	25	33	33
Librarian Speaking to groups	4	19	23	39	10	71	2	50	39	40
Other	2	10	7	12	1	7	1	25	11	11
None	2	10	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	3

Output Measures

A large percentage of libraries surveyed (46%) do not measure the use of the local history/genealogy collection. Reference services are the most widely measured aspects of the collection (37% of responding libraries), followed by materials use (33%). Only four percent of the libraries measure materials access. Nine percent of the responding libraries measure use of other aspects of the collection. Among those are correspondence (both regular and e-mail), number of patrons registered in the local history Guest Book or other sign-in register, and hits on the library website. One medium size library measures research requests and type, such as e-mail, regular mail, and telephone. Two small libraries did not respond to this question. This is interpreted as not measuring use of the collection.

TABLE 24

OUTPUT MEASURES OF LIBRARIES WITH LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS

	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (98)	
Measures	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Materials Use	3	14	20	34	7	50	2	50	32	33
Materials Access	0	0	4	7	0	0	0	0	4	4
Reference Services	6	29	21	36	7	50	2	50	36	37
Other	0	0	6	10	3	21	0	0	9	9
None	13	62	26	44	4	29	2	50	45	46

Library Support of Local History/Genealogy Collection
(Opinion)

The majority of all local history/genealogy specialists (91%) responding to this survey feel that their library systems are generally supportive of the needs of the local history/genealogy collection. This ranges from 81% of the small libraries to 92% of the medium size libraries and 100% of both the large and very large libraries. One medium size library did not answer this question.

Sixty-eight percent of the responding libraries feel that a sufficient amount of the budget is appropriated for the local history/genealogy collection. All of the very large libraries and 13 of 14 large libraries feel that the budget is sufficient, while 42 of 59 medium libraries and eight of 21 small libraries feel the same way. Eleven libraries (three small and eight medium) did not reply to this question.

Slightly under half (47%) of all responding libraries believe sufficient training is available for staff assigned to the local history/genealogy collection. Over half of the small libraries (52%) do not believe there is sufficient training, while 100% of the very large libraries believe there is enough training provided. Medium size libraries are divided equally between those believing there is sufficient training (44%) and those believing there is not (44%). Seventy-nine percent of the local history/genealogy specialists in large libraries believe their library systems provide sufficient training for staff. Four small libraries and seven medium libraries did not answer this question.

Half of all responding libraries believe that staff is given sufficient time to manage and maintain the local history/genealogy collection. Again, 100% of the very large libraries believe they are given enough time to manage the local history/genealogy collection. Seventy-one percent of the large libraries, 48% of the small libraries, and

42% of the medium libraries believe staff is given enough time. Two small libraries and eight medium size libraries did not reply to this question.

TABLE 25

SUPPORT OF LIBRARY SYSTEM TOWARD LOCAL HISTORY/GENEALOGY NEEDS (OPINION)

	Small (21)		Medium (59)		Large (14)		Very Large (4)		Total (98)	
Support	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Generally Supportive										
Yes	17	81	54	92	14	100	4	100	89	91
No	4	19	4	7	0	0	0	0	8	8
Sufficient budget										
Yes	8	38	42	71	13	93	4	100	67	68
No	10	48	9	15	1	7	0	0	20	20
Sufficient Training										
Yes	6	29	26	44	11	79	4	100	47	47
No	11	52	26	44	3	21	0	0	40	41
Sufficient Time										
Yes	10	48	25	42	10	71	4	100	49	50
No	9	43	26	44	4	29	0	0	39	40

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Local history and genealogy collections are an important part of Ohio public libraries. The response rate (70%) to this survey signifies a strong interest by public libraries in this topic. Objectives of this study were to determine how local history/genealogy collections are utilized in Ohio public libraries, and what sort of planning results in effective and accessible collections. Another objective was to look at the role computer technology is playing in the utilization of local history/genealogy collections. This study also looked at whether or not size of the library affects the development and management of the collection, as well as services to patrons.

Recommendations and guidelines for local history collections can be found in library literature (in particular, the American Library Association guidelines for establishing local history collections and guidelines for preservation, conservation, and restoration of local history and local genealogical materials). It appears that most local history/genealogy specialists responding to this survey are aware of, and striving to follow, accepted practices. Responses to this questionnaire also indicate that the specialists in charge of these collections are creative, enthusiastic, and committed to developing and maintaining their collections in the best manner possible. The majority of respondents have already established collections, but a few have newly established collections, and others are in the process of organizing. One librarian notes that her local history/genealogy department has extended its hours, doubled its staff, and tripled the collection since its creation in 1995. Another respondent notes that his small library is

just beginning to appreciate its local history collection, and that they hope to be offering much more in two to three years.

This chapter will provide a general profile of Ohio public library local history/genealogy collections. It will also look at the strengths and weaknesses of the collections, areas for improvement, future trends, and recommendations for effective, accessible local history collections.

PROFILE

Ohio public libraries with local history/genealogy collections range from libraries with service populations of approximately 2,000 to over one million. The majority of libraries responding to this survey were in the mid-range of 10,000 to 99,999 service population. As might be expected, the geographic areas covered by collections extend from local town and county to other states. Generally, the larger the library, the more extensive the collection. A large variety of materials are found in local history collections. Besides books, the most prevalent materials are maps, clippings, microform (mostly census and newspaper records), ephemera, newspapers, pamphlets, and photos.

Approximately half of the local history/genealogy collections are located in a separate room. Two other popular locations for collections are in the reference area or in a separate area of the library. The very large libraries do not have their collections in separate rooms. Nearly all of the libraries have the local history collection available the same number of hours the library is open.

Management of local history collections varies widely from library directors to volunteers. Nine libraries of 98 have a full-time local history librarian with an MLS, and

one has a full-time local history librarian with an MA. Six of the nine work in large libraries, two in medium, and one in a small library. Also, one library has a full-time archivist and one has a full-time genealogist. The majority of local history/genealogy collections are managed by a general reference librarian with a Masters degree in Library Science. Many libraries have shared management duties between staff members.

Results of this survey indicate that size of the library significantly affects several areas of local history/genealogy collections. According to this survey the following are most prevalent in very large or large libraries and least prevalent in small libraries: plans, procedures, and policies regarding the local history collection, security measures, preservation measures, special organizational methods, availability of electronic resources, programs and projects, and output measures. Size of library does not appear to significantly influence the following: use of volunteers, services to patrons, cooperative relationships and practices, and publicity methods.

Size of library is also reflected in the opinions of local history/genealogy specialists regarding support of local history collection needs, and provision of sufficient budget, training, and time. Although 91% of all responding specialists feel that their library systems are generally supportive of the needs of the local history/genealogy collection, this opinion is directly proportional to the size of the library. All of the respondents in very large and large libraries feel that they have support, while 92% of the medium size and 81% of the small libraries feel the same way. In fact, specialists in the four very large libraries surveyed feel that they are provided with a sufficient budget, sufficient staff training, and sufficient time to manage and maintain the collection. A high amount (92%) of large library local history/genealogy specialists feel their budget is

sufficient, with 79% believing they are given enough training and 71% believing they are given enough time.

Seventy-one percent of the medium size libraries are believed to provide an adequate budget, while less than half (44% and 42% respectively) are believed to provide sufficient staff training and time to manage the collection. According to this survey, 38% of small library local history/genealogy specialists believe there is enough budget appropriated for local history needs, and only 29% believe staff assigned to the local history collection receive enough training. More local history specialists in small libraries (48%) than medium size libraries (42%), however, believe they have sufficient time to manage and maintain the collection.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Ohio public libraries with local history/genealogy collections have several areas of strength, as well as weakness. It is difficult to generalize due to the diversity and sizes of the libraries and collections surveyed; however, some general patterns do appear. In general, strong points of these collections are the plans, procedures, and policies in place, security measures, organizational methods, availability of electronic resources, cooperative relationships and activities, and the general feeling of support for local history needs. Areas which are adequate, but could be improved, include preservation measures, services, and publicity. Areas of weakness are written policies, use of volunteers, programs and projects, and use of output measures. Areas of particular concern for medium and small libraries are the perceived lack of sufficient budget, training, and time to develop, maintain, and manage the local history collection.

Plans, procedures, and policies are both a strength and weakness in local history/genealogy departments in Ohio Public Libraries. Ninety-two percent of the responding libraries indicate they have plans, procedures, and policies in place for such things as collection development, disaster preparedness, preservation, volunteers, and other. Sixty-one percent of the respondents indicate that they have a collection development policy, while less than one-third have disaster and preservation plans, or procedures for volunteers. Again, the larger the library, the more plans in place. However, neither the small nor the very large libraries have procedures for volunteers. Developing and implementing such plans, particularly disaster and preservation plans, is an area that all libraries can improve on.

Although a high percentage of libraries have plans, procedures, and policies in place, only 59% of them address local history/genealogy issues with written policies. Issues such as copying privileges, circulation, gifts, and fragile/rare materials may be covered by general reference policies, but addressing the specific needs of the local history collection ensures that it will be handled consistently. This is especially important if volunteers are involved.

Most libraries surveyed (90%) indicate that they implement some sort of security measures for their local history/genealogy collections. The most popular method for both small and very large libraries is having staff retrieve materials. Other methods employed are using locked storage cases (and rooms), guest register, requiring patron IDs, and having staff make copies. Magnetic security strips are used on local history material, along with other library materials.

Preservations methods are employed most often by large and very large libraries. For instance, 100% of the very large libraries, and 71% of the large libraries use acid-free containers, while 51% of the medium and 33% of the small libraries do. Although, it is apparent from the survey that many of the smaller libraries are also following accepted preservation practices. Along with the acid-free containers, one-third of the small libraries also keep materials in a cool, dry, environment, protected from light. Only one small library uses map cases and protective gloves. Twenty-nine percent of the small and 11% of the medium libraries did not reply to this question. This is interpreted as not using preservation methods, indicating that this is an area to be improved. Even if a budget does not allow purchase of preservation materials, it may be possible to implement cost-free measures, such as staff retrieval of materials and protecting materials from light.

Organization of local history material depends on local needs, resources, and preferences (Burns, 1987, 18). This is reflected in responses to this survey indicating a variety of ways to organize local history/genealogy collections. Ohio public libraries are creative in organizing materials to provide the best access to patrons. Some of these special organizational methods include having separate files for items such as photographs, postcards, and other materials; having a separate catalog for all local history/genealogy materials for patron use; organizing items geographically; and providing indexes to items such as tax records, obituaries, vital records, and pamphlet and clipping files and/or newspaper records. One large library shelves local history/genealogy books by location or topic because that is the way genealogists need to

use the materials. Another large library is currently reorganizing the collection *geographically to make it more accessible.*

Four libraries (four percent) of 98 stated that they do not have any special organizing methods for their local history/genealogy collections, and six small libraries and 11 medium libraries did not reply to the question. This is interpreted as not having any special organizational techniques. These libraries may want to consider another method of organization if it is determined that the local history collection is not being accessed by patrons as often as it might be.

Use of volunteers in providing service to patrons, as well as assisting with other aspects of local history collections is an underused resource in Ohio public libraries. ALA guidelines (RQ 1993, 43) state that the local history collection should be processed and maintained by trained staff, but can be assisted by properly trained volunteers to provide service to patrons. However, only 43% of Ohio public libraries responding to this survey use volunteers, and only 5% offer the volunteers training in local history/genealogy.

Those libraries that do have volunteers use them in diverse ways. Volunteers staff the local history room, instruct patrons in genealogical research, catalog local history material, work on special projects, index and file, organize and label materials, organize newspaper clippings, and type materials for the library web site. They also assist staff with research requests, and identify photos and provide background information about Community events. One director of a small library states that he found masses of archival materials gathering dust when he started his position, but had no time to implement a program. The collection is now being organized by a volunteer. The local

history/genealogy specialist of a medium size library notes that the library's genealogy room is maintained primarily by volunteers who are members of the local chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society.

Medium size libraries use volunteers more than other size libraries. (Approximately half of medium size libraries have local history/genealogy volunteers). Only one very large and three large libraries recruit volunteers. This may be because these libraries have sufficient budget to have professionals handle the collections. Fifteen of 21 small libraries state that they do not use volunteers. Possibly this is due to the necessity of having a staff member take the time to recruit, train, and schedule a corps of volunteers. Alternatively, it could mean that the professional staff feels that the size of the collection does not warrant having extra help. The use of volunteers can provide a service to both library patrons and professional staff, particularly those that feel there is not sufficient budget or time to manage the collection properly.

Ohio public libraries appear strong in the area of services to local history/genealogy patrons. All responding libraries offer a variety of usual library services, as well as services unique to the library's community. Typical services include bibliographies of local materials, descriptions of the local history collection, local histories, and referrals to other institutions. Others include brochures, microfilm rental, classes, pathfinders, genealogy research handouts, research requests by mail, and research for a fee. Electronic resources, and local history/genealogy programs and projects are also services and are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Electronic resources for use of local history/genealogy patrons are prevalent in Ohio. Ninety of the 98 responding libraries currently have internet access, and three plan

to acquire internet access within the next year. Popular electronic resources are e-mail reference service, library web sites with local history/genealogy information, genealogy web sites, CD-ROM finding aids and genealogy software programs. Currently less popular are online subscriptions to local history/genealogy databases and digitization of local history materials. Generally, size of library does impact the availability of electronic resources. Three small libraries and four medium size libraries have no electronic resources available to local history/genealogy patrons.

Sixty percent of responding libraries plan to add to their electronic resources within the next year. This ranges from all of the very large libraries to 71% of the large, 51% of the medium, and 48% of the small libraries. Thirty-one percent of all libraries combined plan a digitization project, and 17 % plan to add a library web site pertaining to local history/genealogy. Five libraries state that they are not planning any electronic resources within the next year. However, thirty-nine libraries did not respond to this question. This is interpreted as not having any electronic resources planned. It could also mean that the libraries are not certain at this point what funds will be available for future plans.

A very high percentage (93%) of Ohio public libraries with local history/genealogy collections cooperate in some way with other institutions, such as historical societies, schools, other libraries, universities, and museums. These relationships involve the sharing of local history resources and services. Relationships with historical and/or genealogy societies are most common, with 91% of all libraries working cooperatively with these societies. Historical/genealogy societies are most helpful in providing volunteers, materials, and local knowledge. Libraries often

reciprocate by providing rooms for meetings and storage of the society's collection. One medium size library houses a county genealogical society. The respondent notes that the society is well managed and the staff is available to help patrons.

Areas in which libraries cooperate with other institutions include co-sponsoring of workshops and programs, referrals, tours, and displays. Cooperating and sharing with other local organizations and institutions is an effective way to provide better service to patrons, and to educate the community about the holdings of the local history/genealogy collection. Many of the respondents stated that they do not duplicate the holdings of libraries close to their facility, but do refer patrons to the other library.

Programs and projects involving the local history/genealogy collection are areas that could be improved in Ohio Public Libraries. According to this survey, 59% of the responding libraries presented local history/genealogy programs and only 44% were involved in local history projects during the past year. Generally, fewer programs and projects are being planned for the upcoming year. According to this survey, the ability or willingness to provide programs for local history/genealogy patrons, and be involved in local history projects, is related to size of library. The larger the library, the more programs and projects. The very large libraries may be an exception to this assumption, as one very large library did not reply to questions regarding this topic.

Local history/genealogy specialists presented a variety of creative programs for patrons, as well as participated in many diverse projects during the past year. The most popular program was having a speaker on a local history or genealogy topic. Next most popular were classes on genealogical research. Other programs included having an author on a local history/genealogy topic, a program on Carnegie Libraries of Ohio, use

of computers and genealogy in internet research, tours for school groups, and crafts and games programs relating to local history. Future programs are similar in nature.

Projects included publication of local histories, oral histories, photographing the community, tombstone transcribing, and video portraits. Others were preserving old photographs, conducting workshops for high school students on beginning genealogy, creating a brochure about local cemetery occupants, indexing local obituaries and other records. Digitization projects are ongoing for several libraries. One library is working with a local television station to produce some two-minute shots on local history.

Interesting projects are planned for the future as well. Among these are classes on conservation, a church record inventory, development of a "pathfinder" for the local history room, and internet and digitization projects. One library plans to have a week-long awareness of the local history/genealogy collection on its bookmobile. They will also have a tent set up at a local fair and at other area activities. As can been seen, programs and projects are only limited by the imagination. Not all of the mentioned projects require a large budget or a great deal of time, and some of them could be conducted by trained volunteers.

Eighty-three percent of all responding libraries publicize their local history/genealogy collection. Large libraries (93%) promote their collections most, followed by medium (83%) and small (80%) libraries. Two very large libraries did not reply to this question, but the other two indicate that they do publicize. Among the means of publicity are brochures, librarian speaking to groups, newsletters, local media, exhibits, programs, fliers, bookmarks, posters and bibliographies, library website, and newspaper articles written by library staff. Libraries must publicize in order for patrons

to know what is available to them, and to encourage donations of local history materials to the collection. It is evident that the majority of libraries do promote their collections, but it is an area that can be improved upon, as many publicity methods are low or no cost.

Slightly over half (54%) of Ohio public libraries responding to this survey measure the use of their local history/genealogy collection. Large libraries measure use more than the other size libraries, and small libraries measure the least. Reference service and materials use are the most commonly measured areas. Other measures are done for materials access, correspondence (both regular and e-mail), number of patrons registered in the local history guest book or register, hits on the library website, and research requests by type (such as regular mail, e-mail, telephone, etc.).

Measuring the use of the local history/genealogy collection can provide a look at how patrons use the materials available and whether or not the library is meeting the patron's needs. For those libraries interested in developing their local history/genealogy collections with increased funding and staff, output measures can be a vital tool for gathering support for local history/genealogy needs. Three responding libraries state that they are using grants. One is for materials, one is to increase community awareness of the library as a deposit for local history materials, and one is a three-year grant to pay for an archivist/local history librarian to develop and organize the collection. The three-year grant is a cooperative effort among the library, city, school, and local historical society.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this survey show that very large libraries in Ohio have established, well-funded local history/genealogy collections with appropriate staffing. The majority of large libraries also appear to have sufficient budget, but staff would like more training

and time to manage the local history/genealogy collection. Medium size and small library local history/genealogy specialists believe they could benefit from more funding, training, and time. Based on a review of the library literature and the results of this survey, the following are recommendations for those librarians in the process of creating a local history/genealogy collection, and for those wanting to develop their current collections.

- Put all plans, procedures, and policies in writing. This will clarify what your goals for the collection are, and what needs to be accomplished.
- Preserve and secure the local history collection. Follow accepted practices and take advantage of low-cost methods if necessary.
- Organize the local history/genealogy collection according to local resources and preferences.
- Use volunteers. Volunteers are a great resource for assisting with the local history/genealogy collection.
- Use available technology. Electronic resources are usable for many aspects of local history - from publicizing the collection, to genealogical research, to preservation of materials through digitization.
- Cooperate with other institutions and organizations. Cooperation and communication with other groups can lead to sharing of resources and promotion of the library collection.
- Present programs and develop projects. Be creative and offer programs of local interest. Involve volunteers in community projects.

- Publicize and promote the collection. Publicity does not need to be cost-prohibitive.
- Measure use of the collection. How is it being utilized? Use your statistics to gain support (funding, donations, a volunteer program, etc.) for the needs of the collection.
- Be creative. Use your knowledge of the local area to develop a unique collection that is accessible to all members of the community.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Re: Survey of Local History/Genealogy collections in Ohio public libraries

January 19, 1999

Dear Local History/Genealogy Specialist:

I am a graduate student at the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University. As part of the requirements for my master's degree I am conducting a survey of the local history/genealogy collections and services in public libraries in Ohio. The results of the survey will serve as a basic guide to librarians who are establishing local history/genealogy collections, or those who simply wish to update their resources and services.

If you choose to participate in the survey by completing the enclosed questionnaire, confidentiality will be assured. Only the investigator has access to the survey data. The questionnaires are coded so that follow-ups can take place. The identifying codes will be removed once they are no longer needed. There is no penalty of any kind if you should choose not to participate in the study, or if you should withdraw at any time. Your cooperation is valuable to the success of the study, but it is voluntary. A copy of the results of the study will be available upon request.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at (330) 928-9386 or my research advisor, Dr. Richard Rubin, at (330) 672-2782. If you have any further questions regarding research at Kent State University you may contact Dr. M. Thomas Jones, at (330) 672-2851.

Thank you very much for your cooperation. You may return the questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope to me at the following address:

Beth E. Daugherty
4530 Pineridge Dr.
Stow, Ohio 44224

Sincerely,

Beth E. Daugherty
Graduate student

APPENDIX B

SURVEY OF LOCAL HISTORY AND GENEALOGY COLLECTIONS IN OHIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

1. What is the service population of your library?

   _____

2. What is the main geographic area emphasis of the local history/genealogy collection?
   ___ City or town and local community ___ County ___ Region of the state ___ Ohio
   ___ Other (please specify) _____

3. Which of the following materials are included in the local history/genealogy collection? (check all that apply)
   ___ Books ___ Clippings ___ Ephemera ___ Govt. Documents
   ___ Manuscripts ___ Maps ___ Newspapers ___ Oral History tapes
   ___ Pamphlets ___ Photographs ___ Postcards ___ Video tapes
   ___ Microforms (please specify) _____
   ___ Other (please specify) _____

4. Where is the local history/genealogy collection located? (Select the major location)
   ___ Separate room away from the general collection
   ___ Separate area away from the general collection
   ___ Reference area
   ___ Circulating stacks
   ___ Other (please specify)_____

5. How many hours per week is your library open? _____

6. How many hours per week is the local history/genealogy collection available to patrons? _____

7. Who oversees the management of the local history/genealogy collection?
   ___ Full time Local History Librarian with an M.L.S.
   ___ General reference librarian with an M.L.S.
   ___ Trained staff, full time local history, no M.L.S.
   ___ Trained staff, part time local history, no M.L.S.
   ___ Trained volunteer
   ___ Other _____

8. Which of the following plans, procedures, and policies are in place regarding the local history/genealogy collection? (check all that apply)
   ___ Collection development policy
   ___ Disaster plan
   ___ Preservation plan
   ___ Procedures for volunteers
   ___ Other (please specify) _____

9. If your library has a local history/genealogy collection development policy, is it incorporated into the general collection development policy of the library? ___ Yes ___ No

10. Which of the following local history/genealogy issues are covered by written policies? (check all that apply)
    ___ Copying privileges
    ___ Circulation
    ___ Gifts
    ___ Use of fragile and rare materials
    ___ Other (please specify) _____
    ___ Local history/genealogy issues are not specifically addressed in writing

11. Which of the following security measures does your library use for the local history/genealogy collection? (check all that apply)
    ___ Local history room is kept locked when not staffed
    ___ Rare or fragile items are kept in locked storage cases
    ___ Magnetic security strips are attached to rare or fragile items
    ___ Local history materials are retrieved by and returned to staff
    ___ Patrons are asked for an ID when using certain materials
    ___ Patrons are asked to sign a guest register when using local history materials
    ___ Staff does copying for patrons
    ___ Other (please specify) _____

12. Which of the following preservation measures does your library use for the local history/genealogy collection? (check all that apply)
    ___ Acid-free storage containers are used when needed
    ___ Maps are stored in map cases
    ___ Materials are stored in a cool, dry environment
    ___ Materials are protected from damaging light
    ___ Protective gloves are used when handling rare or fragile items
    ___ Materials are retrieved by and returned to staff
    ___ Other (please specify) _____

13. Which of the following organizational methods is used for the local history/genealogy collection? (check all that apply)
    ___ A uniform list of subject headings used for all local history/genealogy materials
    ___ A separate catalog of all local history/genealogy materials for patron use
    ___ Separate files for items, such as photographs, postcards, books, etc. for inventory and control
    ___ Other (please specify) _____

14. Which of the following applies to the library's use of volunteers for the local history/genealogy collection? (check all that apply)
    ___ Volunteers are actively recruited
    ___ Volunteers are provided with training in local history and genealogy
    ___ Volunteers are used to staff the local history/genealogy room or collection
    ___ Volunteers are used to instruct patrons in genealogical research
    ___ Volunteers are used to catalog local history materials

___ Other (please specify)_____
___ Library does not use local history/genealogy volunteers

15. Which of the following services are offered to patrons of the local history/genealogy collection? (check all that apply)
___ Bibliographies of local materials
___ Copies of the collection description
___ Multiple copies of local histories available for circulation
___ Referrals to resources outside the library (eg. local historical society or county courthouse)
___ Other (please specify) _____

16. Which of the following electronic resources are available to patrons of the local history/genealogy collection? (check all that apply)
___ CD-ROM finding aids, such as PERSI and AGGL
___ Internet access to the World Wide Web
___ Online subscription to a local history/genealogy database
___ Web sites selected by the library pertaining to local history/genealogy
___ Web sites selected by the library with basic genealogy instruction
___ Genealogy software for family tree making
___ Library web site with link to, or information about, library local history/genealogy collection
___ Digitization of part or all of the local history/genealogy collection
___ E-mail reference service
___ Other (please specify)_____
___ Library does not have electronic resources available for local history/genealogy patrons

17. Which of the following resources for local history/genealogy patrons is your library planning to add in the next year? (check all that apply)
___ CD-ROM finding aids, such as PERSI and AGGL.
___ Internet access to the World Wide Web
___ Online subscription to a local history/genealogy database
___ Web sites selected by the library pertaining to local history/genealogy
___ Web sites selected by the library with basic genealogy instruction
___ Genealogy software for family tree making
___ Library web site with link to, or information about, library local history/genealogy collection
___ Digitization of part or all of the local history/genealogy collection
___ E-mail reference service
___ Other (please specify) _____

18. Which of the following organizations does the library have a cooperative relationship with regarding local history/genealogy resources and/or services? (check all that apply)
___ Local historical and/or genealogical societies
___ Local schools
___ Local libraries
___ Other (please specify)_____
___ Library does not have cooperative relationship regarding local history/genealogy with other organizations

19. In which of the following ways does the library cooperate with other organizations? (check all that apply)
___ Conducting workshops for educators regarding local history/genealogy resources
___ Programming
___ Provision of meeting rooms
___ Referral services
___ Other (please specify) _____

20. Which of the following local history/genealogy programs has the library presented during the last year? (check all that apply)
___ Classes on genealogical research
___ Author of local history/genealogy topic
___ Speaker on local history/genealogy topic
___ Guided autobiography program
___ Other (please specify)_____

21. Which of the following local history/genealogy projects has the library been involved with during the last year? (check all that apply)
___ Oral history project
___ Tombstone transcribing
___ Photographing the community, documenting business locations, buildings, etc.
___ Video portrait project
___ Publication of local histories
___ Other (please specify) _____

22. Which of the following programs or projects is your library planning to do in the next year? (check all that apply)
___ Classes on genealogical research
___ Speaker on local history/genealogy topic
___ Author of local history/genealogy topic
___ Guided autobiography program
___ Oral history project
___ Video portrait project
___ Tombstone transcribing
___ Publication of local histories
___ Photographing the community, documenting business locations, buildings, etc.
___ Other (please specify) _____

23. In which of the following ways does the library publicize its local history/genealogy collection? (check all that apply)
___ Bibliographies
___ Brochures
___ Fliers
___ Local media
___ Posters
___ Bookmarks
___ Exhibits
___ Library newsletter
___ Newsletter of local group
___ Programs

___ Librarian speaking before groups on local history/genealogy topics
___ Other (please specify) _____

24. Which of the following output measures does the library use for the local history/genealogy collection? (check all that apply)
___ Materials use measures (measuring the extent of use of the collection)
___ Materials access measures (measuring the users' success in obtaining the materials they want)
___ Reference services (measuring reference transactions and/or reference completion)
___ Other (please specify) _____
___ Library does not measure use of the local history/genealogy collection

25 In your opinion (please reply yes or no):

Yes	No	
___	___	Is your library system generally supportive of local history/genealogy needs?
___	___	Is a sufficient amount of the budget appropriated for local history/genealogy?
___	___	Is sufficient training provided for staff assigned to local history/genealogy?
___	___	Is staff given sufficient time to manage and maintain the local history/genealogy collection?

26. Comments:

_____
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Thank you for you assistance.

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